



Town of Chatham

*Office of the Selectmen
Town Manager
549 Main Street
Chatham, MA 02633*



Jill R. Goldsmith
TOWN MANAGER
jgoldsmith@chatham-ma.gov

Board of Selectmen REMOTE PARTICIPATION POLICY

Tel: (508) 945-5105
Fax: (508) 945-3550
www.chatham-ma.gov

First Reading: June 4, 2014
Approval Date: June 4, 2014
Trial Period for FY2015
Amended 6/23/2015
Trial Period Extended for FY2016

Purpose.

It shall be the policy of the Board of Selectmen to allow remote participation in accordance with the requirements of Massachusetts Open Meeting Law 940 CMR 29.00, section 29.10, for all subsequent meetings of all Boards, Committees and Commissions in the Town of Chatham, from July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016, the so called "extended trial period".

Minimum Requirements for Remote Participation.

- a. Members of each Board, Committee, and Commission shall vote on the adoption of the Remote Participation Policy for their Board/Committee/Commission.
- b. Members of a public body who participate remotely and all persons present at the meeting location shall be clearly audible to each other;
- c. A quorum of the body, including the chair or, in the chair's absence, the person authorized to chair the meeting, shall be physically present at the meeting location, as required by [M.G.L. c. 30A, sec 20\(d\)](#);
- d. Members of public bodies who participate remotely may vote and shall not be deemed absent for the purposes of [M.G.L. c. 39, sec. 23D](#).

Permissible Reasons for Remote Participation.

- a. Personal illness;
- b. Personal disability;
- c. Emergency;
- d. Military Service; or
- e. Geographic distance.

Technology.

- a. Remote participation media will be by telephone or internet enabled audio/video conferencing.
- b. When video technology is in use, the remote participant shall be clearly visible and audible to all persons present in the meeting location.
- c. The public body will determine the media used by its members.
- d. The person chairing the meeting may decide how to address technical difficulties that arise as a result of utilizing remote participation, but is encouraged, wherever possible, to suspend discussion while reasonable efforts are made to correct any problem that interferes with a remote participant's ability to hear or be heard clearly by all persons present at the meeting location. If technical difficulties result in a remote participant being disconnected from the meeting, that fact and the time at which the disconnection occurred shall be noted in the meeting minutes.

Procedures for Remote Participation.

- a. Any member of a public body who wishes to participate remotely shall, as soon as reasonably possible prior to a meeting, notify the chair or, in the chair's absence, the person chairing the meeting, of his or her desire to do so and the reason for and facts supporting his or her request. The chair /acting chair shall notify the Information Technology Director for remote participation room set- up at least 24 hours prior to the scheduled meeting.
- b. At the start of the meeting, the chair shall announce the name of any member who will be participating remotely and the reason under 940 CMR 29.10(5) for his or her remote participation. This information shall also be recorded in the meeting minutes.
- c. All votes taken during any meeting in which a member participates remotely shall be by roll call vote.
- d. Costs such as phone or internet charges to the member for remote participation shall be borne by the remotely participating member.
- e. A member participating remotely may participate in an executive session, but shall state at the start of any such session that no other person is present and/or able to hear the discussion at the remote location, unless presence of that person is approved by a simple majority vote of the public body.
- f. When feasible, the chair or, in the chair's absence, the person chairing the meeting, shall distribute to remote participants, in advance of the meeting, copies of any documents or exhibits that he or she reasonably anticipates will be used during the meeting. If used during the meeting, such documents shall be part of the official record of the meeting, and shall be listed in the meeting minutes and retained in accordance with [M.G.L. c. 30A, sec. 22](#).
- g. The Board of Selectmen may revoke Remote Participation in the same manner as it was adopted.